

Biscayne, Dry Tortugas & Everglades National Parks Big Cypress National Preserve

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO THE NATIONAL PARK AREAS IN SOUTH FLORIDA

Printed in 2012



BISCAYNE NATIONAL PARK

DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK

EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE

Control information, social information, social information, indicates in the control in the con

PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO THE

SOUTH FLORIDA NATIONAL PARKS

Planning ahead is the best way to take advantage of these opportunities, and choosing what time of year to visit, based on your interests, can be the key to an enjoyable trip.

Seasons in South Florida

Rainy Season (Summer)

During the rainy season warmer, clear ocean waters make snorkeling in Biscayne and Dry Tortugas the perfect way to explore these parks. Boating and canoeing in open waters helps to

avoid mosquitoes. Boat tours out of Biscayne National Park and the Gulf Coast and Flamingo areas of Everglades National Park are another way to stay cool.

Seasonal rains bring higher water levels to Everglades and Big Cypress, causing

wildlife such as alligators and wading birds to disperse and to be seen less frequently. Mosquito levels may become high, and exploring some areas of the parks can become intolerable.

While visiting during this season you may find daily afternoon thunderstorms, high humidity and temperatures in the 80's & 90's. During this time of year you will also find an array of blooming plants, views of towering storm clouds, and opportunities to experience the parks with fewer visitors.

Dry Season (Winter)

The dry season is the busy season in South Florida's national parks. Most visitors to Big Cypress, Biscayne and Everglades come between December and March. March through May are busy months at Dry Tortugas National Park. During months

of higher visitation, lodging reservations are recommended, and campgrounds may be busy.

While some birds are drawn to the parks year-round, the abundance of migrating and wintering birds makes South Florida's National Parks a birder's paradise. Falling water levels within the Everglades and Big Cypress areas result

in abundant wildlife concentrated in ponds and canals, providing excellent viewing opportunities.

Larger crowds, fewer mosquitoes, greater wildlife viewing opportunities and more enjoyable hiking, camping and canoeing adventures in all the parks characterize this time of year. Finally, the parks offer a greater variety and number of ranger-led activities that provide an in-depth look into their special natural and cultural resources.

Average **Average Average Monthly** Month Humidity Minimum Maximum Rainfall Temperature Temperature **Dry Season 66°F**/19°C **76°F**/24°C 57% **2.1"**/5.5cm through April **Rainy Season** May through **76°F**/24°C **85°F**/29°C **5.39"**/13.3cm October Annual **71°F**/22°C 81°F/27°C **45.44"**/115.4cm

BISCAYNE



BIG CYPRESS



DRY TORTUGAS



EVERGLADES



SEASONAL

ACTIVITIES PLANNER

Park Activities	Big Cypress		Biscayne		Dry Tortugas		Everglades		Ranger Tips
	Dry	Rainy	Dry	Rainy	Dry	Rainy	Dry	Rainy	
Alligator Viewing	•	•					•	•	Best in the Dry Season
Bicycling	•						•	•	
Bird Watching	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Best in the Dry Season
Boat / Canoe Rentals			•	•			•	•	
Boat Tours			•	•	•	•	•	•	For Dry Tortugas, depart Key West
Camping	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Best in the Dry Season
Crocodile Viewing			•	•			•	•	Best in the Dry Season
Fishing	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	State License Required
Gift and Book Sales	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Hiking	•		•				•		
Lighthouses			•		•	•			Accessible by boat only
Manatee Viewing	•		•				•	•	
Paddling	•	•	•	•			•	•	
Picnicking	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Buggy in the Wet Season
Ranger Programs	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	Visitor Centers have details
Snorkeling/SCUBA			•	•	•	•			SCUBA requires license
Swimming					•	•			
Tram Tours							•	•	
Walking	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Can be buggy in the Wet Season

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there entrance fees?

No entrance fees are charged at Big Cypress National Preserve or Biscayne National Park. For cars, vans, and motorhomes, Everglades National Park charges a \$10.00 fee at the Homestead and Shark Valley entrances. Fees vary for commercial vehicles (call 305-242-7700 for details). Bicyclists and people on foot pay \$5.00 per person. Entrance fees are valid for 7 days. Yearly and lifetime interagency passes are honored at entrance stations. You may purchase passes at entrance stations and some visitor centers.

What are the hours of operation?

In Everglades National Park, the road from the Coe Visitor Center to Flamingo is open 24 hours; the Shark Valley entrance is open from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Big Cypress National Preserve is open 24 hours. Convoy Point at Biscayne National Park is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., the rest of the park, accessible by boat only, is open 24 hours. See individual park pages for visitor center hours.

What about mosquitoes?

Mosquitoes and a variety of biting flies are most severe during the hot, humid summer months, but can be present year-round. As an alternative to using insect repellents, you can take several actions to avoid insects:

- Cover up! Wear long-sleeved clothing. A good mosquito net jacket can go a long way towards making your visit more enjoyable. Look for one that keeps the netting off your skin.
- Avoid grassy areas where mosquitoes can hide.

Frequently asked questions, cont'd.

- · Close doors quickly.
- Where provided, stay on boardwalks and pavement.
- Seek open, breezy areas.
- · Avoid shady places.

If you use repellent, apply it sparingly to exposed skin. An effective repellent will contain 20% to 35% DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide). DEET in high concentrations (greater than 35%) may cause side effects, particularly in children. Repellents may irritate the eyes and mouth, so avoid applying repellent to the hands of children. Insect repellents should not be applied to children under the age of 3.

Should I be aware of certain regulations?

- When observing animals or plants, pull completely off the road. Exercise caution when exiting your vehicle.
- · Rangers monitor speed by radar. Obey speed limits.
- It is dangerous and illegal to feed or harass any wildlife.
- Follow state firearms regulations. Firearms are never allowed inside federal buildings such as Visitor Centers and Administrative Offices.
- Skateboards, roller skates (and Heeley types), scooters, and personal watercraft such as jet skis, Wave Runners, and Sea Doos are prohibited.
- Pets are allowed on a leash in some areas, but not on trails or boardwalks, and must be under physical control at all times.
- Spearfishing is not allowed in Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks. It is allowed in Biscayne National Park with a valid Florida saltwater fishing license.
- Fishing regulations in Everglades National Park differ from state law, and some areas of the park are
 closed to fishing. Pick up your copy of Everglades fishing regulations at any visitor center or entrance
 station.
- Each park is unique, and regulations are tailored to fit the particular park area. Check at visitor centers and entrance stations, or ask a ranger for more information.

SAFETY IN THE PARKS



In the area's national parks and preserves it is easy to enjoy viewing wildlife, yet the animals are untamed. It is important to respect animals by not crowding them. If an animal changes its behavior because of your presence, then you are too close.

...While watching wildlife

Respecting Animal Homes

Alligators, birds, turtles, bobcats...the South Florida Parks are spectacular places to experience wildlife. In these natural environments, animals are protected and free to move and live as they wish. They remain wild, untamed, and relatively unafraid of humans. It is your responsibility to keep a safe distance from all wild animals; they can be dangerous if approached too closely.

Do not feed alligators or any other wild animal; it is bad for the animal, risky for you, and illegal in a national park. If you see someone feeding or harrassing wildlife, please report this to a ranger or call 305-242-7740 or #NPS on cell phones.

Viewing Alligators Safely

An adult alligator has powerful jaws, strong teeth, and a brain the size of a walnut. This reptile acts primarily on instinct, assessing other creatures as potential threats or prey. Avoid approaching an alligator closer than 15 feet; they can easily outrun vou.

Wading or swimming is prohibited in most freshwater bodies of water in the parks. Take special care with your small children and dogs; they are closer in size to an alligator's natural foods.

Elevated boardwalks like the Anhinga Trail, the Shark Valley Tram Road and Observation Tower in Everglades, and the HP Williams area in Big Cypress offer good opportunities to safely view these remarkable creatures.

Raccoons and Other Wildlife

Raccoons and other animals can become aggressive if confronted, and may carry rabies. Feeding wildlife is illegal in the national parks and preserves. Animals which are left to take care of themselves are healthier and less dangerous to people. Store food in your vehicle or a hard-sided container when camping.

Identifying Snakes

Twenty-six native species of snakes may be found in the South Florida parks. Four of these are venomous: the eastern diamondback rattlesnake, dusky pigmy rattlesnake, cottonmouth, and coral snake. Nonnative Burmese Pythons, which can exceed 15 feet in length, have been illegally released and now breed in South Florida. Venomous snakes and pythons aren't frequently encountered and generally avoid contact with people. If you see a snake, give it a wide berth, and please report python sightings to a park ranger. Venomous snakes and pythons aren't known to exist in the Dry Tortugas.

This place is for the birds!

Feeding gulls and crows human food can make them overly aggressive and annoying. When pelicans are fed fish they learn to associate humans with food. Many habituated pelicans are then caught on fish hooks while trying to steal from anglers. Discarded monofilament line entangles and kills birds and other animals, so please dispose of it properly.

...On the trails

Heat

Summer heat and humidity can be oppressive, but heat-related injuries can occur any time of the year in South Florida. Be sure to drink plenty of water. Most

doctors recommend drinking at least one gallon of water or electrolyte beverages per day while involved in outdoor activities. Don't wait to drink until you feel thirsty as at that point you may already be dehydrated. Drinking sugary, alcoholic or caffeinated drinks is not recommended. Water is the best bet.

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms occur almost daily during much of the summer, and sporadically during the rest of the year. If

you hear thunder, seek cover immediately, especially if you are on the water. The safest places to be are inside a building or a vehicle. Check the local weather forecast before heading out for the day.

Avoiding Poisonous Plants

Poison ivy, poisonwood and manchineel are three poisonous plants that can be found in the parks and preserves of South Florida. All are poisonous to the touch. Manchineel is primarily found in the Flamingo area of Everglades National Park, and is rarely contacted. Poison ivy and poisonwood can be found in any wooded area of the parks. Avoid contact with these plants by staying on trails and not touching plants you cannot identify. Park staff can assist in identifying these plants.

...On the water

Boating Safely

Boating in Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay, and the Everglades backcountry can be a challenge. Much of the water is quite shallow, and you can ground your boat quickly. In addition to damaging your boat, groundings destroy precious seagrasses that provide food and shelter to creatures inhabiting these waters. Always refer to nautical charts as well as tide charts for a safe boating experience. Additional boating safety considerations include: Being aware of the weather and water conditions. Get up-to-date information from the National Weather Service or at area park visitor centers.

File a float plan. Be sure that a family member or friend knows where you are going and when you are planning to return. Provide them with a written description of your vessel and whom they should contact if you do not return as scheduled.

Be sure that your vessel has all safety equipment, including: Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFDs), fire

extinguisher, flares, noise making device and a working VHF radio. Do not depend on cellular phones. Be sure that all passengers 6 years of age and younger wear a PFD at all times.

Alcoholisamajor contributor to boating fatalities. Drunk boaters become drunk drivers.

Improve your boating skills in the shallow waters of Florida Bay by taking the free Eco-Mariner Course at www.ecomariner.org



Safe boating protects natural habitats such as seagrass beds and coral reefs, both of which are valuable to a variety of wildlife, and us. Safe boating also saves money and lives. (Sea turtle photo by Bill Keogh.)

Manatees

Manatees frequent many of the waterways in Everglades and Biscayne National Parks. Because they are slow-moving and feed in shallow water, many manatees are killed each year by boat propellers. Be especially careful in areas posted with manatee signs. If you see a dead or injured manatee, please report it to park rangers by calling 305-242-7740 or #NPS on cell phones.

What's back there?

Remember to secure items in your boat. Valuable items including fishing rods, life vests, seat cushions, coolers, and clothing often blow out of boats and are found along the park shorelines and roadways. Garbage left on boats can become flying debris. Please help keep South Florida national parks litter-free!

Navigating...

Important nautical charts for South Florida National Parks can be purchased at stores in the parks and within local communities.

Biscayne National Park

NOAA Nautical Chart

11451 - Miami to Marathon and Florida Bay

Dry Tortugas National Park

NOAA Nautical Chart

11013 - Florida Straits

11434 - Florida Keys Sombrero Key to Dry Tortugas

11438 - Dry Tortugas

Everglades National Park

NOAA Nautical Chart

11430 - Lostman's River to Wiggins Pass

11432 - Shark River to Lostman's River

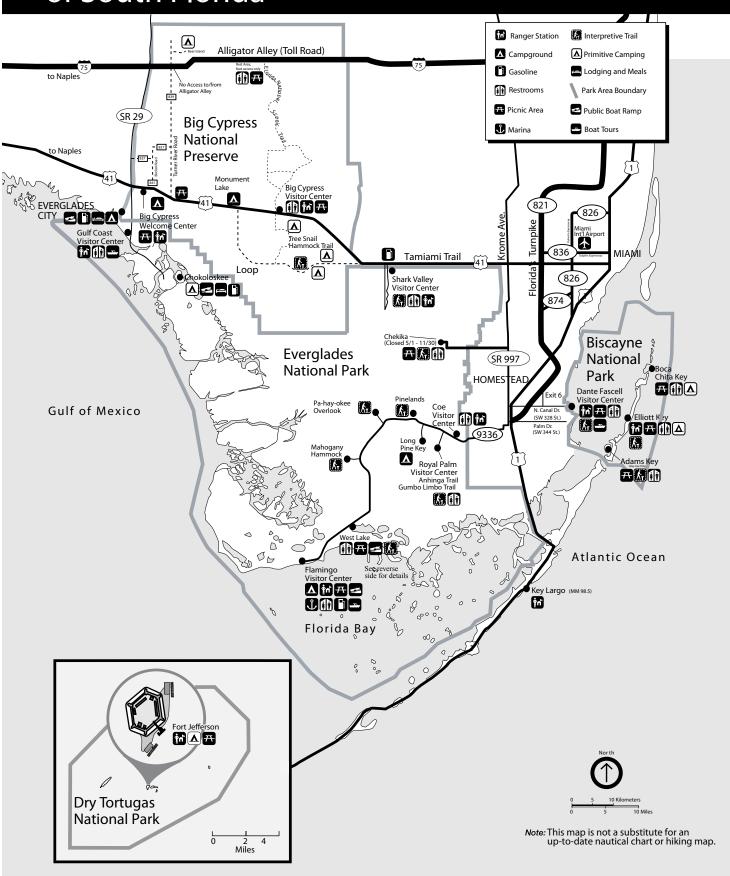
11433 - Whitewater Bay

11451 - Miami to Marathon and Florida Bay





National Parks and Preserves of South Florida



Did you know? The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

BIG CYPRESSNATIONAL PRESERVE

Seasonal sheet flows of water from northeast to southwest across the Big Cypress Swamp carve narrow, linear valleys just inches deep into the limestone. Cypress trees grow tall in the slightly deeper water of these eroded strands. In some areas the water has eroded deep circular depressions in the limestone substrate, creating suitable soil depths for tall cypress. The shallower soil along the edge, or higher sides, of these depressions results in smaller trees. As a result, dome-shaped humps dot the horizon cypress domes. Between the strands, clay-like marl soils form prairies lush with grasses and wildflowers. These strands, domes, and

prairies, together with pinelands, hardwood islands or "hammocks," and a fringe of mangrove forest, produce the rich diversity of habitats within Big Cypress National Preserve.

Water is the key here. The Preserve receives nearly 55 inches of rainfall each year, flooding the cypress strands and prairies with a shallow sheet of life-giving water. Plants and animals in Big Cypress and Everglades depend on this water for survival. It flows through the Preserve into the 10,000 islands area along the Gulf of Mexico, delivering valuable nutrients to estuarine species like snook, shark and crab.

The Preserve provides refuge for species threatened by development of this popular state. Endangered species such as

Florida panthers, wood storks and red-cockaded woodpeckers can be found in the Preserve. Rare orchids, ferns and bromeliads (air plants) are found in more inaccessible areas. Humans, too, find refuge here. Clear, bright skies unlit by city lights invite stargazing. Hiking, canoeing and camping opportunities abound. With care, future generations will find refuge and a new vocabulary in Big Cypress National Preserve.



What is a Preserve?

Big Cypress National Preserve was authorized in 1974 and comprises 729,000 acres. It was the first national preserve established by the National Park Service. A preserve allows a broader range of pre-existing activities. Hunting, off-road vehicle use and oil drilling are allowed here and not in nearby Everglades and Biscayne National Parks.

Visitor Center

The Oasis Visitor Center is located midway between Miami and Naples on the Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41). Available there: information, wildlife exhibits, educational sales items, and a 15-minute film. The Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center is open from 9:00 - 4:30, every day except Christmas and is located about 5 miles east of SR 29 on the Tamiami Trail.

Ranger-conducted Activities

Programs are offered on a regular basis in several areas of the park. A greater number and variety of programs-including swamp walks, canoe trips, bike tours, and campfire programs - are conducted during the dry season. Consult the park website or visitor center for details on dates, times and availability. Park rangers at the Preserve are available to conduct programs within local communities and on-site. Call 239-695-1164 for details and arrangements.

Kirby Storter Boardwalk

Located west of the Oasis Visitor Center along US 41, this elevated boardwalk takes you through prairie, dwarf cypress and into the heart of a cypress strand. Look for alligators, wading birds and a variety of migrating songbirds.

Fishing/Canoeing/Kayaking

Anglers can pursue freshwater fish in the canals along the Tamiami Trail, the Turner River Road and throughout the Preserve. Licenses and regulations are available in Everglades City Monday through Friday. Turner River and Halfway Creek, as well as the Barron River Drainage, can be canoed or kayaked southward to the Everglades City area. Check at visitor centers for details about this and other canoe/kayak trips.

Camping

There are four small, primitive, free campgrounds within the Preserve. Campgrounds on the loop road are not suitable for large R.V.'s Monument Lake and Midway Campgrounds located along U.S. Highway 41 have water and modern restroom facilities; fees are charged for use of campgrounds. Prepare for mosquitoes and take water if using the primitive campgrounds. There is a privately owned campground in Ochopee and several nearby in Chokoloskee.

Bicycling

Trails suitable for mountain bicycles can be found in the northern portion of the Preserve. Check at the visitor center for details.

Hiking

The Florida National Scenic Trail begins in the Preserve and provides miles of hiking



Visitors can join NPS staff and volunteers during canoe trips, swamp walks and other programs at Big Cypress National Preserve, and the other national park units in South Florida. Check at park visitor centers, or on park websites for details.

for the adventurer. Short trails include the Fire Prairie Trail and Tree Snail Hammock. With a GPS unit and good preparation, off-trail hiking is superb in the dry season. Check with the visitor center staff or website for trail information.

Lodging and Dining

There are local restaurants in Ochopee, Everglades City and Chokoloskee.

Scenic Drives

The Loop Road (County Road 94), Turner River Road (County Road 839), Wagonwheel Road (County

Road 837), and Birdon Road (County Road 841) all provide excellent opportunities to get off the main highways and experience a wilder Florida. Inquire at visitor centers about current conditions of these gravel/dirt roads.

Important Information

Established in 1974 729,000 acres

Mailing Address: 33100 Tamiami Trail E· Ochopee, FL 34141

Phone: 239- 695-1201

Website:

www.nps.gov/bicy





Wildlife Viewing and Bird Watching

Alligators, wading birds, and wildflowers are the main attractions here, seen easily from wildlife viewing platforms at Oasis and HP Williams wayside. A drive along the Turner River Road will provide ample opportunities to see these local residents, especially during the dry season. Ask the visitor center staff for the current birding hot spots. Do not feed wild animals and keep a safe distance of at least 15 feet from them. Alligators can be particularly dangerous when fed and can move much more quickly than most people think. Pets and children are particularly vulnerable; keep them out of harm's way! Remember, no collecting is allowed and all plants and animals within the Preserve are protected.

BISCAYN ENATIONAL PARK

Known locally as a fantastic place for outdoor and water-based recreation, the park protects and preserves a nationally significant marine ecosystem with mangrove shorelines, a shallow bay, undeveloped islands, and living coral reefs. Biscayne National Park has protected this unique underwater world for over 40 years.

The shoreline of Biscayne Bay is lined with a deep green forest of mangroves. These trees, with their complex system of prop roots, help stabilize the shoreline and provide shelter for wildlife such as raccoons, snakes, birds and marine life. Their leaves become a vital part of the food chain when they fall into the water.

Lush seagrass beds found throughout
Biscayne Bay help maintain the water's clarity. The
Florida spiny lobster depends on this rich habitat and
the bay has been designated a sanctuary where
lobsters are protected year-round. Shrimp,
fish, sea turtles, and manatees also utilize
these productive underwater pastures.

On the eastern edge of Biscayne Bay are the northernmost Florida Keys. These protected islands, with their tropical hardwood forests, remain undeveloped and serve as reminders of the area's past.

On the Atlantic side of the islands lie the most diverse

and beautiful of the underwater communities - the coral reefs. The reefs support a kaleidoscope of life. Plants, fish, and other animals abound in the full spectrum of the rainbow.

The resources protected within Biscayne National Park are beautiful, diverse and productive; they are also fragile. Fish and animals can be injured and killed by trash in the water. Seagrasses can be torn up by boats. Touching coral may open the way for disease. Some of our actions can cause great damage forethought and care can preserve and protect.

Dante Fascell Visitor Center

Tour the park's visitor center with exhibits, videos, information and educational sales items. The center is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. From Florida's Turnpike, take Exit 6 (Speedway Boulevard) and follow signs.

Ranger-conducted Activities

Programs are offered on a regular basis in several areas of the park. A greater number and variety of programs are conducted during the dry season. Consult park web site, www.nps.gov/bisc, or visitor center staff for details on dates, times, and availability.

Boat Tours

The park concessionaire provides snorkeling, SCUBA and glass-bottom boat tours of the park's waters. Island tours are available winter through spring. Call (305) 230-1100 for schedule and recommended reservations.

Fishing/Boating

Anglers and boaters can launch their own boats from county-operated marinas adjacent to the park to venture into Biscayne Bay and to explore offshore coral reefs. Stop at the visitor center for regulations and to purchase nautical charts. For any boats docked after 5:00 p.m., a \$20 overnight boat camping fee is charged at Boca Chita and Elliott Key harbors.

Canoeing/Kayaking

Paddlers can explore the mangrove shoreline along the mainland. Canoes and kayaks are rented from the park's concessionaire. Stop by the visitor center for weather conditions and suggested routes.

Camping

Primitive campgrounds, accessible only by boat, are located on Elliott and Boca Chita Keys. Individual campsites are \$15 (\$20 with marina use) per night first-come, first-served. Group campsites are \$30 per night. To reserve a group site call 305-230-1144 x 008. All supplies must be brought in and all trash must be packed out. Prepare for insects year-round! The park's concessioner provides transportation to Elliott and Boca Chita Keys for campers November to May - call 305-230-1100.



On Boca Chita visitors can camp, picnic and glimpse the area's history. Boaters also have the opportunity to enjoy Biscayne Bay and the upper Keys, Elliott and Adams Keys, within Biscayne National

Attention Boaters!

To prevent damage to your property and to the fragile resources of the park, come prepared.

Learn how to read and use nautical charts. Refer to your chart prior to leaving the dock. Know the tides. Stop by any local marina or the park visitor center for the latest tide information.

Learn how to use your electronic navigation equipment and always keep a visual watch on your surroundings. Be sure that your VHF radio, and any other communication equipment is in good working order. Do not depend on cell phone service in remote areas.

Check the marine forecast prior to leaving the dock and watch for any changes in weather. Always file a float plan. Remember these rhymes, which have aided mariners for years: Brown, brown, run aground. Avoid brown areas! The

water color indicates that reef formations or seagrass beds are close to the surface. White, white, you just might. Use caution! Sand bars and rubble areas may be much shallower than they appear. Green, green, nice and clean. Green waters are generally safe for shallow draft boats. Larger, deeper draft vessels should exercise extreme caution. Blue, cruise on through. Clear sailing in deep water areas.

Oh no! You ran aground! Now what?

STOP! Attempting to power off can cause significant damage to your vessel and to the living bottom communities. If you do run aground or if you venture into shallow water and start stirring up mud in your wake.

Turn your motor off. Do not attempt to power off. Trim your motor up.

Try to push or pole your boat off, following the route you took in.

Wait for high tide in order to drift off.

Call for commercial assistance on VHF channel 16.

Important Information

Established in 1968 173,000 acres

Mailing Address: 9700 SW 328 Street Homestead, FL 33033

Phone: 305-230-7275 (PARK)

Website: www·nps·gov/bisc



For boat tour, canoe, kayak rental information and reservations: Biscayne National Underwater Park, Inc·

305-230-1100 www·biscayneunderwater·com

DRY TORTUGA:

Lying at the far western end of the Florida Keys, 68 miles west of Key West, are seven coral rubble isles called the Dry Tortugas, dominated by the massive brick fortress of Fort Jefferson.

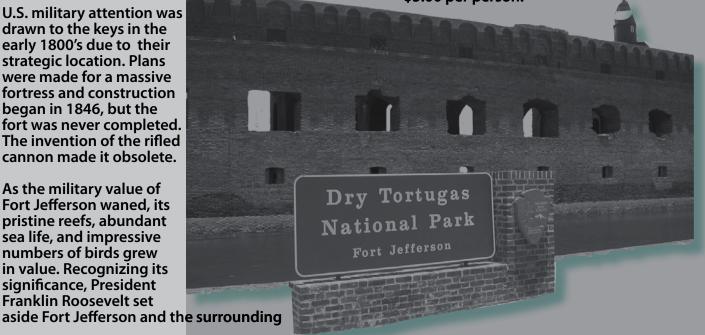
The Tortugas were first discovered by the Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon in 1513. Abundant sea turtles, "tortugas" provisioned his ships with fresh meat, but there was no fresh water-the Tortugas were

U.S. military attention was drawn to the keys in the early 1800's due to their strategic location. Plans were made for a massive fortress and construction began in 1846, but the fort was never completed. The invention of the rifled cannon made it obsolete.

As the military value of Fort Jefferson waned, its pristine reefs, abundant sea life, and impressive numbers of birds grew in value. Recognizing its significance, President Franklin Roosevelt set

waters as a national monument in 1935.

Dry Tortugas National Park is accessible only by boat or seaplane. Check the park's web page for a list of private carriers. No water, food, fuel, supplies, or accommodations are available at the park. Educational sales items are available in the visitor center. There is an entrance fee of \$5.00 per person.



Visitor Center

Information, exhibits, an orientation video, and educational sales items are available. The visitor center is open daily.

Touring Fort Jefferson

Take a self-guided walking tour of one of America's largest 19th century coastal forts. Follow the signs with a Civil War soldier on them.

Ranger-conducted Activities

Check the dock's announcement board or the visitor center for dates and times of ranger-guided programs.

Camping

Camping is available on a first-come, first-served basis for \$3.00 per person, per day. All supplies, including fresh water,



A lighthouse towers over Fort Jefferson. NPS Photo

must be brought in. Parties of more than ten must make reservations by writing to the park or by calling (305) 242-7700

Fishing

Sports fishing is permitted outside the Research Natural Area. Lobstering and spear fishing are prohibited in the park. Florida state fishing laws and regulations apply. Florida fishing license required. Fishing licenses are available in Key West or by contacting the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at www.myfwc.com.

Boating

Private boaters can visit the park. Nautical charts are sold at the park's visitor center and in Key West. Information is obtainable from the Key West U.S. Coast Guard Station, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Charter Boat Association. Boaters should be aware of the

possibility of extremely rough seas. Check with a ranger for rules on docking, mooring and anchoring.

Snorkeling

Patches of healthy coral reef, some easily accessible from the shore and in shallow water, are snorkeling havens. Do not disturb coral or shells; all coral, living and dead, is protected from collection. Shipwrecks and all historic artifacts in the park are protected by law.

Bird Watching

The Dry Tortugas are renowned for spring bird migrations and tropical bird species. Contact the park for a bird checklist and information.

Bush Key



Bush Key, adjacent to Fort Jefferson, is closed January through September to protect sensitive bird nesting habitat. Please obey all signage and regulations.

Research Natural Area

In late 2006, Dry Tortugas National Park introduced a Research Natural Area (RNA), which covers about 45% of the park's total area. The zone's purpose is to provide a "baseline" for measuring long-term ecological changes such as to sport fish populations. To maintain the RNA in its most natural state, fishing and anchoring are now prohibited within its boundaries. Boating, snorkeling, and diving are still allowed, but mooring buoys will be provided for snorkelers and divers. Contact a park ranger or check the park's website for more information and a map of the RNA.

Kev West Eco-Discovery

Prior to visiting the remote Dry Tortugas National Park, visit the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center in Key West, and take a journey into the native plants and animals of the Keys, both those that live on land and underwater.

The Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center inspires students, local residents and visitors to become good stewards of the unique Florida Keys ecosystem.

The Center's goal is to help all visitors develop an appreciation and personal responsibility for protecting the Florida Keys and South Florida ecosystem.

The Eco-Discovery Center features 6,000 square feet of interactive and dynamic exhibits depicting the terrestrial and underwater habitats of the Florida Keys.

The Center features all aspects of the biodiversity of the Florida Keys, and also focuses on human interaction with the environment, the management of marine protected areas, and the maritime culture and history of the area.

The Eco-Discovery Center is made possible through a joint-venture by the National Park Service; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the South Florida Water Management District.

The Center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday (closed Thanksgiving and Christmas), and is located at the Truman Annex - 35 East Quay Road, Key West, FL 33040. Call for more information 305-809-4750 or visit on the Web http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/eco_discovery.html



Important Information

Established in 1935 as Fort Jefferson National Monument; rededicated as Dry Tortugas National Park in 1992.

64,700 acres

Information Inquiries: 40001 State Road 9336 Homestead, FL 33034-6733 305- 242-7700

Group Camping Reservations: P.O. Box 6208 Key West, FL 33041 or email: shari_quinn@nps·gov

Website: www.nps.gov/drto







EVERGLADESNATIONAL PARK

his is the third largest national park in the lower 48 states, covering 2,300 square miles. You can begin your Everglades National Park adventure from a number of locations, including Everglades City, Shark Valley, Homestead and Key Largo.

The park, lying at the southern end of the Everglades ecosystem, is defined by water. The land is nearly flat and level, and water, only a few inches to a few feet deep, creeps very slowly overland to Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. Within this vast region are diverse habitats: freshwater marl prairie and sloughs, cypress domes, pinelands, tropical hardwood hammocks, mangrove forests, and shallow estuarine bays.

Come explore the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States. Everglades National Park boasts rare and endangered species and has been designated a World Heritage Site, International Biosphere Reserve, and Wetland of International Importance, significant to all people of the world.



In General

Ranger-conducted activities and programs are offered on a regular basis in several areas of the park. Consult the park web site or visitor centers for details on dates, times, and availability.

Exploring Trails

Short walking trails allow you to experience the park's various habitats, while longer hiking trails take you deeper into the park. Make sure to bring plenty of drinking water and be aware of changing weather conditions. Some trails can be intolerable due to mosquitoes and biting flies, especially in the summer.

Fishing/Boating

The mangrove estuary, Gulf of Mexico, and Florida Bay provide opportunities to explore by boat and to fish. Obtain regulations online, at the entrance station or at the Flamingo Marina, Flamingo or Gulf Coast Visitor Centers. Boat ramps are located at Flamingo, the Florida Keys, and Everglades City area. A boat launch fee (good for 7 days after purchase) is charged when entering the park. \$5 for motorboats, \$3 for non-motorized craft. An annual pass is also available.

Camping

National Park Service campsites (fees charged). With the exception of the group campsite, Long Pine Key Campground sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Flamingo Campground sites can be reserved Dec. - March by calling 800-365-CAMP or online at www.recreation.gov, otherwise, first-come, first-served. For information about private campgrounds in Everglades City, call the Everglades City Chamber of Commerce at 239-695-3941 or www. evergladeschamber.net.

Wilderness Camping

Most sites in the park's Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness are accessible by boat or canoe only. Permits are required year-round for overnight camping for a fee of \$10.00. In summer, permits are obtained at no charge by self-registration at the Flamingo and Gulf Coast Visitor Centers and Florida Bay Ranger Station. Ask for a copy of the Wilderness Trip Planner or website for information on backcountry camping.

Accessibility

All major trails in the park are accessible, and assistance is provided for access to boat and tram tours.

Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center

From Miami, take the Florida Turnpike south to the last exit. Follow the signs to Everglades National Park. Open daily, December - April 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., May - November 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Information, exhibits and educational sales items are available.

Royal Palm Visitor Center

4 miles past the Coe Visitor Center

Open daily. Information and educational sales items. Ranger-led activities are offered daily.



Ernest Coe Visitor Center. NPS Photo

Anhinga Trail

A must-see! This .8-mile loop trail offers one of the best opportunities to view wildlife, including alligators and birds, up close! Wheelchair and stroller accessible.

Gumbo Limbo Trail

This .4-mile loop trail winds through a once dense tropical hardwood hammock reshaped by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Wheelchair and stroller accessible.

The Main Park Road

A scenic 38 mile drive from the Coe Visitor Center to Flamingo.

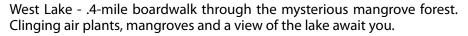
Walking Trails

Experience a diversity of Everglades habitats on several short, wheelchair-accessible trails leaving from parking areas along the Main Park Road.

Pinelands Trail - .4-mile loop through subtropical pine forest maintained by fire. Pine rocklands are the most diverse terrestrial habitat in South Florida.

Pa-hay-okee Overlook - .2-mile boardwalk leads to an observation deck offering a view of the vast Everglades from horizon to horizon.

Mahogany Hammock Trail - .4-mile boardwalk that meanders through a dense, jungle-like hardwood hammock. Glimpse a variety of tropical plants.





Anhinga drying its wings. NPS Photo

Flamingo

38 miles past the Coe Visitor Center

The Flamingo Visitor Center offers exhibits, information, and wilderness permits available. Staffed daily from late November through May 1st, call 239-695-3101 for hours.

Concession Services

A marina store, with fuel service, boat tours and boat/canoe/kayak rentals, is open year-round. Food service is provided seasonally at the Buttonwood Café near the visitor center. Due to hurricane impacts in 2005, lodging is currently unavailable in Flamingo.

Wildlife Viewing

At low tide, birds congregate on the Florida Bay mud flats visible from the visitor center breezeway. Alligators and

endangered American crocodiles bask around the Flamingo Marina boat basins. Eco pond is a good place to view birds and other wildlife.



Florida gar having a meal. NPS Photo

Canoeing/Kayaking

Information and maps of local canoe trails are available in the Flamingo Visitor Center lobby. The Nine Mile Pond Trail (5.5-mile loop) and trips into Florida Bay (variable distances) are suggested routes. Rentals are available at the Flamingo Marina. Prepare for mosquitoes.

Boat Tours

Narrated boat excursions into Florida Bay (Dec. - Apr.) and the mangrove estuary (year-round) depart daily from the Flamingo Marina. Information is

available at the Flamingo Marina or by calling 239-695-3101.

Chekika

Located off State Road 997 (Krome Avenue) approximately 15 miles south of U.S. 41.

Due to seasonal flooding, Chekika is closed during the wet season, and open dawn to dusk December through April. Covered picnic areas, portable restrooms, and a self-guided walking trail are available. Potable water is not available.

Shark Valley Visitor Center

On Hwy. 41 (Tamiami Trail) 30 miles west of the Florida Turnpike; exit for S.W. 8th Street.

The visitor center is open daily 8:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. December through April. Hours for May through November are 9:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Information and educational sales items are available.

Walking Trails

Bobcat Boardwalk - a .4-mile round-trip walk starting at the visitor center passes through sawgrass marsh and a bayhead.

Otter Cave - This 1 mile round-trip from the visitor center enters a tropical hardwood hammock.

Tram Trail - The 15-mile tram trail is excellent for strolling and wildlife viewing.

Bicycling in Shark Valley

The 15-mile tram trail is great for bicycling. A variety of marsh animals may be seen. Bicycle rentals are available at Shark Valley. Permits are required for groups of 10 or more. Helmets are required for children under 17.

Tram Tour

The Shark Valley Tram Tour provides an introduction to the freshwater Everglades and provides opportunities to view wildlife. Reservations can be made by calling 305-221-8455.



Flats fishing in Florida Bay. NPS Photo

Gulf Coast

Located 3 miles south of Highway 41 (Tamiami Trail) on Highway 29, in Everglades City.

The visitor center is open daily, December through April from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., May through November from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Information, exhibits, wilderness permits, educational sales items, and picnic opportunities available. A variety of marinas and boat launch facilities are available near the visitor center.

Boat Tours

Daily boat tours into the mangrove estuary and Ten Thousand Islands offer views of a unique environment and its wildlife. Information and tickets available in the lower level of the visitor center building. General information is available by calling 239-695-2591.

Canoeing/Kayaking

From the visitor center, paddlers can venture into the beautiful Ten Thousand Islands and view birds, dolphins, manatees and other wildlife. Canoes can be rented in the lower level of the visitor center building. Check with rangers for weather conditions and other safety information.





Royal Palm Visitor Center, Everglades National Park



Black crowned night heron

Important Information Phone:

Established in 1947 1,508,570 acres

Mailing Address: 40001 State Road 9336 Homestead, FL 33034-6733

Website:

www·nps·gov/ever

Toll-free 24-hour emergency 1-800-788-0511 or #NPS on cell Park Information 305-242-7700 Flamingo Visitor Center 239-695-2945 Gulf Coast Visitor Center 239-695-3311 Shark Valley Visitor Center 305-221-8776 Key Largo Ranger Station 305-852-0304 Campground Reservations 800-365-CAMP

Concession Services:

Everglades National Park Boat Tours and Canoe Rentals in Everglades City 239-695-2591

In Flamingo 239-695-3101

Shark Valley Tram Tours 305-221-8455









WHO CARES ABOUT SOUTH FLORIDA'S NATIONAL PARKS?

The world-class fishing in Everglades National Park is much more than just casting and catching. Fishing in the Everglades is an experience both above and below the water line. From soaring bald eagles to schools of 200 pound tarpon, there's no telling what you might see."

- Captain Lain Goodwin, Backcountry Fishing Guide, Key Largo

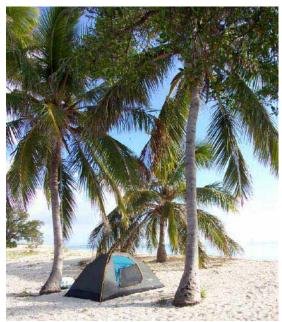
"South Florida's parks are microcosms...with endangered animals, invasive exotic plants, encroaching human development, coastal erosion, and a fight over a limited resource (water). By studying and understanding these regional dilemmas, we are better able to tackle similar problems everywhere on the planet."

-Erik Hutchins, Producer of the South Florida Educational Program Waterways

"Like Flamingo's early settlers, I first viewed the place from the deck of a sailboat. For more than twenty years I shared that magical experience with visitors from all over the world, sailing Florida Bay on a gaffrigged schooner similar to those used over a hundred years ago. Ghosting silently through the Bay is a magnificent sensation."

-Rob Temple, Former long-time Flamingo resident

"The Short-tailed Hawk...is a rare species encountered only after hours or days of travel in remote places. Somehow, one gets the feeling of finally arriving in the very depths of the



Camping at Dry Tortugas National Park. NPS Photo

tropical wilderness. To [99.9%] of park visitors the bird will go unnoticed, but to one in a thousand it will have been worth the entire trip to Florida."

-The late Daniel Beard, First Superintendent of Everglades National Park, written in 1938

"Growing up, perhaps I took South Florida's resources for granted, always looking to travel



Colorful and fragile coral reefs in Biscayne National Park

somewhere else. I'll never tire of traveling, but I'll never forget what my partner Roger said as we surfaced from our first dive on Australia's Great Barrier Reef: 'nice dive, but still not as many fish as we saw on that last dive in Biscayne.' And he was right.

-Gary Bremen, South Florida Native and Biscayne National Park Ranger for 12 years

"This environment is an antidote to the high stress, high tech world of finance I inhabit. In the parks, I feel connected to a higher power, a governing and elemental force. And I bring home lessons for living I apply to my clients." -Ellen Siegel, Miami Businesswoman and Board Member of the South Florida National Parks Trust

"The Everglades is a wild place to explore, canoe, and see amazing wildlife. Most importantly, in working with kids, I have a chance to make a difference. If I can create even a spark of appreciation in the decision-makers of tomorrow, then we have a chance to save this place!"

-Allyson Gantt, Environmental Education Coordinator, Everglades National Park

"The Wilderness Waterway is a getaway from the day-to-day lifestyle we have created. It's a place where friendships are formed with other canoeists and where wildlife-manatees, ospreys, bobcats, and wading birds-can be observed, living free in the mangrove estuary. Canoeing the Waterway is an adventure you will always remember."

-Steve Newland, who has paddled over 6,000 miles in the Everglades backcountry during the past 20 years.

"I can't recall all the times I've left South Florida. Most often I've moved on for new work in very different places, like California, Alaska, Maine, and Utah. But I always return-for the profusion of tropical life-parrotfish, crocodiles, white-crowned pigeons, and gumbo limbo trees. I always return!"

-Rob Showler South Florida National Parks

-Bob Showler, South Florida National Parks Naturalist Since 1979

"To some people, the Florida Everglades is just a big swamp... To me, however, the Everglades is the most beautiful and unique place on earth... When you understand the Everglades... you cannot help but see the thousands of naturally beautiful things that are there."

-The late Calvin "Cal" Stone, one of the founding members of the Everglades Conservation and Sportsman's Club, from his book, Forty Years in the Everglades

"The opportunity to volunteer has been most rewarding. Being involved with all the staff and visitors gives a great feeling of satisfaction. Volunteering isn't work: it's fulfillment."

- Steve Dukovitch, 5-year Volunteer at the Gulf Coast Visitor Center, Everglades National Park

"That Cape Sable area is one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen anywhere. It is a strange land, full of strange plants. There is an atmosphere of mystery and strangeness about the whole thing."

- The late Horace Albright, former Director of the National Park Service, quoted in 1930

"Birders come to South Florida's national parks from all over the world to see spectacular assemblages of wading birds, plus White-crowned Pigeons, Mangrove Cuckoos, Black-whiskered Vireos, and other birds found nowhere else in the U.S. Over 350 species of birds have been recorded from the parks. South Florida is a birdwatcher's paradise!"

-Brian Rapoza, Birding Guide, Tropical Audubon Society



A statuesque great blue heron stands watch in Everglades National Park.

"Though best known for their unique ecology, the South Florida **National Parks are** also incredible repositories of human cultural history. The more we learn about how people interacted with this landscape in the past, the more wisely we can interact with it in the future." -Larry Perez,

Everglades Park Ranger

"Big Cypress National Preserve is our country's largest naturally functioning ecosystems east of the Mississippi River. Here, even a Florida panther can live out its life without ever having to cross a road. Once away from the two roads that traverse Big Cypress, I see a land that man has changed little, I hear only the natural sounds of the swamp, and I feel the stress of our urban lifestyle melting away."

-Deborah Jansen, Wildlife Biologist in Big Cypress National Preserve for 20 years

"South Florida National Parks are a blessing. Amidst the concrete jungle South Florida has become, we have an incredible wilderness, offering habitat for wildlife...and pleasure for those who experience it. There aren't many places left that are less populated now than they were 100 years ago."

-Peter Frezza, Scientist, Audubon of Florida

"Nowhere else than in South Florida can you find temperate zone fauna living in habitats dominated by tropical flora. For more than 100 years botanists have explored the region and marveled at plants that also grow naturally in the Bahamas, Cuba and the Yucatan. And where else can your footprints mingle with those of panthers, bears and mink?"

-Roger Hammer, Botanist, Naturalist and Author

"The Everglades provides me with a place to recreate, to seriously study science, and to earn a living. Most of all, the Park provides a refuge and a tonic for whatever is ailing me."

-Leon Howell, Everglades National Park Interpreter

"Sharing the importance and beauty of our National Parks through painting has been a necessary and rewarding process. Through my art and my students' reaction to it, we've connected to the future of our environment."

-Pat Cummins, Miami-Dade art teacher and exhibitor for Biscayne National Park's Community Artists' Program

"The Everglades is special to me because it's a watery wilderness, full of cool plants and animals found nowhere else in the country. While many western national parks can be quite busy, the Everglades is an expansive, uncrowded place of natural beauty; I enjoy hiking its miles of trails in solitude."

-Tim Taylor, Indio, California

"Let us hope that the park continues relatively unscathed through the next several decades of testing confrontations and final adjustments. Then, when someone else sits down to write a better Park Story, he can speak of wood storks and panthers, and everything else that makes South Florida's wild lands such a glory to behold."

-The late Dr. Bill Robertson, Park Senior Biologist and author of <u>Everglades: The Park</u> <u>Story</u>, originally written in 1958 and revised in



The National Park Service, an agency of the Department of the Interior, was established in 1916 to manage a growing system of national parks. Today, the National Park System consists of nearly 400 units. National Parks, National Preserves, Seashores, Monuments, Historic Sites, Lakeshores, Battlefields, and others make up a great repository of national treasures entrusted to the National Park Service. In South Florida, nearly 2.5 million acres of pineland, prairie, tropical hardwoods, mangrove forests, estuaries and coral reefs are preserved for this and future generations. Their scientific, recreational, aesthetic and educational values are limitless.

Experience Your America

Local Visitor Information

Everglades City Chamber of Commerce: 239-695-3941

Homestead/Fla. City Chamber of Commerce 305-247-2332

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce: **305-350-7700**

Key Largo Chamber of Commerce: 800-822-1088

Naples Chamber of Commerce: 239-262-6141

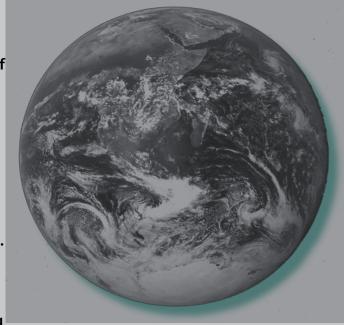
Key West Welcome Center: 800-527-8539

Tropical Everglades Visitor Association: **305-245-9180**

OUR CHANGING WORLD

Each of south Florida's national park areas preserve remnants of the much larger historical Everglades ecosystem—a dynamic landscape driven by the actions of constant change. The bounty of life encountered in these areas owes its existence to the constant migration of myriad

species, daily fluctuations between high and low tides, seasonal patterns of rain and drought, the alternating effects of both fire and frost, and the occasional passage of powerful tropical storms. For millennia, humans have also served as agents of change in south Florida. Ancient peoples managed the landscape with fire and dug canals to aid navigation. Newcomers from the east introduced new plants and animals from afar while also contributing to the extinction of others. Over the past century, in particular, our ability to harness power beyond that of our own muscle has allowed for the rapid development of south Florida's bustling metropolis. During the course of this transformation, a global dependence on fossil fuels has brought about unexpected consequences. Coupled with the extensive modifications already made to the south Florida ecosystem, the accumulation of greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere is heralding an unprecedented era of



accelerated change. In many ways, what a changing climate will mean for the future of south Florida's national park areas is like a path to an unknown locale.

The Warmth and Wildlife Relationship South Florida represents the southernmost range of both alligators and cypress trees—temperate species that have

become synonymous with the area. Scientists have already noted slight increases in annual temperatures for the region, and global climate models predict an additional increase through the end of the century of between 2 and 5.5° C. This warming trend, coupled with anticipated changes in rainfall, could make the area inhospitable to the continued viability of these, and other, temperate species. Some native tropical species, like the American crocodile, could possibly withstand slight increases in temperature. But a warming trend could also prove favorable for the northern migration of undesirable plants and animals. Several nonnative species of tropical origin, after first being introduced in south Florida, have successfully spread throughout the peninsula and points farther north. Climbing temperatures could similarly assist the movement and survival of unwanted invaders like lionfish and Burmese pythons into formerly uninhabited regions.



Lionfish, a beautiful but invasive species, are becoming abundant in the waters of South Florida. NPS $\mbox{\scriptsize Photo}$

What Can I See?

- Find cypress trees and alligators along the Kirby Storter Boardwalk in Big Cypress National Preserve, or consider joining a ranger-led swamp tromp into a cypress dome.
- Find live oaks on a stroll along the Gumbo Limbo trail in Everglades National Park. Like cypress, these temperate trees are also at the southernmost limit of their range.

Dried marl. NPS Photo

Find invasive lionfish in the waters of Biscayne and Dry Tortugas National Parks. These tropical invaders are becoming increasingly common in the warm coastal waters of south Florida.

<u>W</u>ading Through Lean

Like the blood running through our veins, rain sustains the south Florida ecosystem as it pulses through the landscape. Similar to other tropical systems, the region alternates between distinct wet and dry seasons. This fluctuation between flood and drought is the engine that drives the abundance of life, and local plants and animals have evolved in concert with these yearly cycles.

Climate change has the potential to alter the historical patterns and abundance of rainfall in the region. Global modeling suggests



A summer thunderstorm rumbles over the Everglades.

that diminished quantities of precipitation during both the wet and dry seasons—coupled with greater rates of evaporation from rising temperatures—will result in more frequent periods of prolonged drought. Drier conditions would not only prove detrimental to a wide array of freshwater life, but would also result in less productive coastal estuaries as a result of greater salinity. And where drought is particularly severe, the occurrence of intense wildfire is likely to increase in turn.

What Can I See?

- During your visit to Everglades National Park, stroll along the Anhinga Trail or Shark Valley Road to appreciate how water level can influence the activity and nesting of various wading birds.
- Cast a line along the inshore coastlines of Biscayne National Park—with luck (and the proper technique) you'll discover what kinds of fish inhabit these rain-fed estuarine waters.
- Hike along the Florida National Scenic Trail at Big Cypress National Preserve. Though wildfires are frequent here, they are usually tempered by the standing water present most of the year.
- No freshwater exists on the islands of Dry Tortugas National Park. Take a moment to ask a ranger where the park staff and visitors get their drinking water.

Taking a Plunge
Of all the potential effects of climate change, rising seas are of

Of all the potential effects of climate change, rising seas are of particular concern for the low-elevation communities of south Florida. As tides reach farther and farther inland, they introduce greater quantities of salt into freshwater areas. Over time, the vegetation of these communities has begun to change considerably and migrate farther inland, reducing the spatial extent of the freshwater Everglades and lessening the available habitat of associated aquatic species. Should the rate of sea level rise outpace the ability of systems to adapt, the survival of some species or entire communities may be at risk. Rising tides, coupled with the periodic influence of storm surge, could help destabilize some areas and promote rapid erosion. Rising oceans might also bring change to our offshore communities, limiting the amount of light available to sea grasses and corals plunged deeper into the sea.



Encroaching mangroves. NPS Photo

What Can I See?

- Visitors to Everglades National Park should note the posted elevation at Rock Reef Pass. About 60% of the park currently lies at or below 3 feet in elevation.
- Explore the mangrove forests that surround the Dante B. Fascell Visitor Center at Biscayne National Park, or stroll along the West Lake Trail at Everglades National Park. Research shows these mangroves actively draw large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as they grow. The resulting accumulation of sediment and biomass may ultimately help these forests keep pace with rising seas.
- Paddle the Turner River Canoe Trail that straddles Big Cypress National Preserve and Everglades National Park.
 Notice how the two ends of the trail differ—in the near future, they may not!
- Paddle to either Loggerhead or Bush Keys at Dry Tortugas National Park and notice how slightly these island rise above the surrounding waterline.



A visitor enjoys the sunset on the shore of Elliott Key. NPS Photo by Ralph Anderson

The Link Between People and Parks

Protected landscapes have long served as important outdoor laboratories against which to measure the relative impact of man. Continued research and monitoring in Everglades, Biscayne, and Dry Tortugas National Parks and Big Cypress National Preserve will provide needed insight into the dynamics and realities of climate change. Whatever is destined to occur in our urban communities is likely to first be observed within the boundaries of our national park areas.

Concerns about the effects of climate change on human health and prosperity, the security of our coastal infrastructure, the resiliency of our natural resources, and the continued viability of our drinking water supply are all connected to our protected landscapes. This new era of accelerated change is an uncertain path that we all share, and the journey is one we must prepare for together. While south Florida's national park areas brace for an uncertain future, we are also working in the present to help temper the coming effects of climate change.



Solar panels installed on ranger housing have removed Biscayne National Park's Adams Key from the grid. NPS Photo

What Are We Doing About It?

- The National Park Service maintains a robust monitoring program for terrestrial and underwater habitats—helping document and understand the relationship between climate change and observed impacts.
- Park scientists conduct ongoing research documenting how our coastal communities are responding to, and serving to mitigate, the impacts of climate change.
- The National Park Service is planning facilities with the realities of sea level rise in mind. Plans for the post-hurricane rehabilitation of Flamingo, for example, include both elevated and temporary structures.
- The south Florida national parks are actively pursuing the completion of vital restoration projects aimed at returning the flow of freshwater to natural areas. The successful implementation of these

projects will be necessary to temper the effects of declining rainfall and rising sea levels.

- The National Park Service strives to be sustainable, and carbon-neutral in its operations. The Trip Planner you are now holding was printed on post-consumer recycled paper using 100% alternative energy.
- Everglades National Park has recently completed the installation of two important dams at Cape Sable that will lessen the intrusion of salt water into formerly freshwater wetlands.
- Biscayne and Everglades National Parks have recently completed two significant alternative energy projects, using photovoltaic systems to power park residences on Adams Key and solar water heaters to service campground showers at Flamingo.
- The South Florida National Parks collaborate with federal, state, local, tribal, and private partners to minimize the spread and impact of priority nonnative species.
- In 2005, Everglades National Park became a partner in the Climate Friendly Parks program, wherein the park agreed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, improve the efficiency of buildings and facilities, and increase efforts in outreach and education.
- Fire management efforts in the south Florida parks routinely reduce fuel loads, helping guard against catastrophic burns.
- The National Park Service is working to reduce current environmental stressors through fisheries and operations planning.



Did you know? You can stay connected with your South Florida National Parks through popular social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube! Check for these icons throughout this publication. We want to connect with you, and keep you connected to us. We want to meet you where you are, and be where you expect to find us!



VOLUNTEERS

ne of the most successful partnerships of the

National Park Service involves our talented cadre of volunteers. In South Florida alone, these dedicated individuals contribute tens of thousands of hours each year to ensure the parks are safe, clean and enjoyable places to visit. Meet a few of these



Very Important People who volunteer in our Parks our VIPs. Volunteers in America's National Parks are, without a doubt, Very Important People!

Our volunteers come from all over with diverse backgrounds, skills and expertise to help preserve and protect America's natural and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of this and future generations. Young and old alike give of their time to assist in achieving the National Park Service mission.

For information on volunteering in any National Park Service area across the country visit www.nps.gov/ volunteer on the web.

GET INVOLVED AND VOLUNTEER

To volunteer in a national park in South Florida, contact:

Big Cypress National Preserve

Phone: 239-695-1201

email: isobel kalafarski@nps·gov

Biscayne National Park Phone: 305-230-1144

email: abby_plucienkowski@nps·gov

Dry Tortugas National Park Phone: 305-242-7700

Please note that Dry Tortugas currently has all positions filled and an extensive waiting list.

Everglades National Park Phone: 305-242-7752 kevin_bowles_mohr@nps.gov

PARK PARTNERS

SOUTH FLORIDA NATIONAL PARK PARTNERS EXPAND POSSIBILITIES THROUGH JOINT VENTURES

SUPPORT THE FLORIDA NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION AS IT SUPPORTS THE PARKS

he Florida National Parks Association operates under Congressional authorities as the official private, non-profit partner supporting educational, interpretive, historical and scientific research responsibilities of Biscayne, Dry Tortugas and Everglades National Parks and Big Cypress National Preserve.

These areas comprise more than 2.5 million acres and form a vital network in preserving the South Florida ecosystem. By supporting increased public understanding of these world renowned natural and cultural areas, the Florida National Parks Association also tangibly assists in raising public support for their long term preservation and care.

Our mission is to assist visitors and support the parks in their efforts to increase public understanding of the outstanding natural and cultural values of the parks. We are an important link in connecting

people with their parks.

The Florida National Parks Association operates sales outlets located throughout South Florida and offers high quality publications and educational sales items. These materials directly relate to the various stories surrounding the parks and to ways of planning for and enhancing the visitor's experience.

Sales profits are returned to the parks to support educational, scientific, historical and visitor service programs that would not otherwise be available through federally funded sources. We also use a portion of our proceeds to produce

additional new educational materials about the parks, often based on new information that becomes available about the wonders of the South Florida ecosystem.

By becoming a member of the Florida National Parks Association, you can be directly involved in helping preserve these parks as irreplaceable parts of South Florida's heritage. You can join others who care and are motivated to do their part for South Florida, and the nation. Membership also entitles you to discounts on purchases locally and at participating sales outlets nationwide.



Visit www.evergladesassociation.org for information on the Association, how to become a member, and to review our sales catalog.

Discover more about South Florida's National Parks and help foster the continuation of the parks's educational efforts through your support of the Association. Become a member and you will receive a 15% discount on all purchases.

SUGGESTED ITEMS TO PLAN YOUR TRIP OR REMEMBER YOUR VISIT

BOOKS:

Audubon Society Field Guide to Florida by Alden, Cech, and Nelson. Complete field guide to Florida's natural world. Includes birds, insects, reptiles, marine life, plants, geology, weather, ecology, sky maps and a section on national parks and preserves. \$19.95

Charlotte's Story by C.A. Niedhauk. Recounts the hair-raising adventures of Charlotte and her husband Russell when they lived on Elliott Key during the Depression years (1934 and 1935), more than 30 years before it became Biscayne National Park. Their island story culminates with their struggles to survive the terrible Labor Day Hurricane of 1935. 342 pp. paper \$17.99

The Swamp by M. Grunwald. A wonderful book that combines Everglades' history, its future, and investigative journalism. A must read for everyone interested in the Everglades. \$15.00

Everglades - The Park Story by W.B. Robertson. Let an Everglades wildlife biologist introduce you to the flora, fauna, and history of the park in this fascinating, reader-friendly narrative. Full color \$6.95

Everglades - The Story Behind the Scenery by J. de Golia. An interesting review of the Everglades with over 100 photographs of wildlife and habitats. \$9.95

Everglades National Park and the Surrounding Area by R. Hammer. A guide to exploring Everglades, Big Cypress and surrounding state park areas. Includes detailed map and trail descriptions, hiking, biking, kayak and canoe trails, as well as facts about the area's history, flora, fauna, and weather. Excellent for trip preparation to these areas! \$12.95

Everglades Wildguide by J.C. George. Official National Park Service handbook detailing the plants and animals of the Everglades region. Includes checklists. \$7.99

Florida's Unsung Wilderness - The Swamps by Bransilver and Richardson. Journey to Southwest Florida's unique national treasure - the swamplands. 120 photographs and text provide a rare glimpse into this fragile wilderness. \$24.95

Pages From the Past - Pictorial History of Fort Jefferson by A. C. Manucy. Historical Fort Jefferson comes alive in this wonderful comprehensive portfolio full of historic photos, color illustrations and fascinating text. \$7.95

Paddler's Guide to Everglades National Park by J. Molloy. Guide to 53 paddling routes in Everglades National Park, including the Wilderness Waterway. Incudes maps, a rating system, and descriptions of every wilderness campsite. \$16.95

Priceless Florida - Natural Ecosystems and Native Species by Whitney, Means, and Rudloe. An excellent, comprehensive look at the incomparable ecological riches of Florida presented in a way that will appeal to young and old, laypersons and scientists. Full color illustrations and photos. \$25.95

DVD's:

Alligators and the Birds of the Everglades. Two award-winning wildlife programs. 60 min., \$23.95

Everglades & National Parks of South Florida. (Includes Biscayne, Big

Cypress and Dry Tortugas). 90 min. \$19.95

Everglades: A Comprehensive Look at the Everglades. Also includes - The Wonders of Biscayne/Keys. 90 min. \$19.95

CD-ROM:

360 Degrees of Dry Tortugas National Park. Four Chambers Studio. Interactive tour. \$17.95 Discover this unique national park located at the "Gateway of the Gulf" by using your personal computer.

Important Information

The Florida National Parks Association 10 Parachute Key, #51 Homestead, FL 33034-6735

Phone: 305-247-1216 Fax: 305-247-1225 Visit the Association's natural history mail order bookshelf website at: www·evergladesassociation·org

A vibrant purple gallinule on the lookout for a meal. NPS Phot

Phone & fax orders accepted with Visa, Mastercard and Discover

SOUTH FLORIDA NATIONAL PARKS TRUST MAKING FRIENDS FOR SOUTH FLORIDA'S NATIONAL PARKS

he South Florida National Parks Trust is a 501(c) not-for-profit organization dedicated to winning friends and raising funds for South Florida's four National Park sites - Everglades, Biscayne and Dry Tortugas National Parks and Big Cypress National Preserve.

SOUTH FLORIDA
NATIONAL PARKS TRUST

As the principal fund raising partner for these special places, the Trust raises money to support programs and projects in five critical areas: environmental education, visitor services, resource protection, volunteer activities, and community outreach.

Since 2002 the Trust has provided more than \$3 million in direct support to South Florida's national parks to fund programs that benefit the parks themselves, park visitors and surrounding communities. Donations to the Trust have made the following projects possible:

Important Information South Florida National Parks Trust 1390 South Dixie Highway, #2203 Coral Gables, FL 33146 Phone: 305-665-4769

Environmental Education: Thousands of school children learn about the Everglades, Biscayne, Big Cypress and Dry Tortugas each year during overnight camping trips and day programs in our parks. The Trust provides critical support for these programs.



The Big Cypress Welcome Center provides a new gateway into this spectacular national preserve.

Big Cypress Welcome Center: Big Cypress National Preserve opened a \$3 million Welcome Center on U.S. 41 in southwest Florida in March 2010. The Trust raised the money needed for 18 exhibits on the history, hydrology and wildlife of the Big Cypress.

Wayside Exhibits in Everglades National Park: Visitors can explore the Everglades in English and Spanish by visiting nine wayside exhibits installed along the main park road with funds provided by the Trust.

Underwater Maritime Heritage Trail: Six shipwrecks in Biscayne National Park are being highlighted in the only underwater archaeological trail in the National Park Service. Visitors can snorkel and dive various sites using site maps and guides.

Saving Civil War Era Cannons at Fort Jefferson: The Trust is helping to underwrite efforts to restore the massive cannons that defended Fort Jefferson from attack in the 19th century.

Sea Turtle Program: Biscayne National Park and the Trust are working to protect sea turtle nests in the park while educating the public on threats posed by predators and marine debris.

Recruiting Volunteers: The Trust donated a 21-foot boat to Biscayne National Park to help train volunteers and put them to work throughout the park.

Wildlife Viewing Scopes at Flamingo: Everglades National Park installed two wildlife viewing scopes in Flamingo overlooking Florida Bay with funding provided by the Trust.

Junior Ranger Programs: South Florida's national parks expanded the popular Junior Ranger program for children and families by developing new materials in Spanish and Creole with help from the Trust.

By supporting these and other projects, the Trust seeks to foster a greater appreciation for our national parks and promote a legacy of stewardship in South Florida. Become a friend of South Florida's national parks by joining the South Florida National Parks Trust. Visit www.southfloridaparks.org for details on the Trust membership program. All donations to the Trust are tax deductible in accordance with law.



WILDLIFE WATCH

he wetlands of South Florida were once considered worthless and many wanted them drained and destroyed. Today we know that the water flowing through the wetlands is important to all life in the area, including us.

As you explore the national parks you are sure to discover much of the wildlife that depends on this flow of water. Look carefully and have a keen eye, and when you get home don't forget to check out the National Park Service website to see how you can become a Web Ranger. Visit www.nps.gov/webrangers. On the site you'll find a lot of cool things to do that will help you explore other national parks, and what it takes to care for these special places.

While you are in South Florida stop by any of the park visitor centers and get your copy of the National Parks of South Florida Jr. Ranger book (available in English, Spanish and Creole). You can even download and print your very own copy from the park web sites before you get here!

